

MEETING SUMMARY | Dinkey Collaborative Full Group

August 17, 2012

Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, Sierra National Forest

Table of Contents

Action Items	1
1. Welcome and Introductions	2
2. Review of Proposed Revisions to Fisher Marking Guidelines based on July 16 Technical Field Visit 2	
Document Track Changes and Clarifications	2
Regarding Fir and Cedar Clumps and Fisher Rest Site Treatments	2
Fisher Marking Guidelines Title and Intent	3
3. Review of GIS Details of Bald Mountain Proposed Action	4
Scoping Discussion	4
Bald Mountain GIS Project Site Presentation	5
4. Individual Communication Commitments and September 19 Open House	6
5. Prescribed Fire Prioritization Process	8
6. Initial Thoughts on a Landscape Planning Framework	8
7. General Updates	10
Regarding Project Updates	10
Regarding the Monitoring Coordinator, budget discussion, and status of the socioeconomic assessment	10
Regarding the Revised Activities Handout	11
Regarding KREW funds	11
Regarding other Announcements	11
8. Attendees	11

Action Items

1. **All members** to send comments on the fisher marking guidelines to Kim Sorini-Wilson by close of business on August 31. Ms. Sorini-Wilson to then revise the document.
2. **Sue Britting** to help draft introductory text that explains the document's purpose and intended application.
3. **Mosé** to send out the scoping notice to members on Monday, August 20.
4. **All members** to provide comments about the scoping notice by COB August 31.
5. **Kim and Dorian** to post PDF images of the GIS layers for the Bald Mountain project site.
6. **Kim** to provide stand numbers for Bald Mountain proposed treatments.
7. **All members** to provide feedback on the press release by August 31.
8. **All members** to distribute save the date flyers for the open house outreach event, and provide any comments on the press release by August 24.
9. **Mosé** to post the Open House Save-the-Date in District and other Forest Service offices.
10. **Dorian** to create a comprehensive acronym glossary for members of the Collaborative.

11. **Chad** to forward members articles about fire regimes at the landscape level.
12. **Kim** to distribute to all members the Soaproot and Eastfork project prescriptions.

All materials and presentations are available to members on DataBasin.org

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Mosé Jones-Yellin, Deputy District Ranger, High Sierra Ranger District (HSRD), Sierra National Forest (SNF), welcomed all participants to the full Collaborative meeting. Ms. Kim Sorini-Wilson, District Biologist, expressed that her experience substituting as project manager for Mr. Jones-Yellin was rewarding. Mr. Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) Facilitator, reviewed the meeting ground rules and agenda items.

2. Review of Proposed Revisions to Fisher Marking Guidelines based on July 16 Technical Field Visit

Document Track Changes and Clarifications

Mr. Jones-Yellin reviewed the Dinkey North and South Fisher Marking Guidelines document with the group. It was discussed that the revised track changes in blue were from previous field visits and the red changes were changed on August 16, the night before the meeting; these additions were in the original document developed in 2010, but had accidentally been omitted from the material sent to the Collaborative the previous week. Page 7 focused on the July field visits.

It was explained that the language used for the track changes were gathered from the members during field visits. It was noted that on pages 3 and 5, the fisher phrases referring to rest site structure, hiding cover, and pile retention is language taken from discussions where piles were left.

A member stated that they did not support the changes on page 7 and 8 because they call for removal of cedar and fir. It was noted that the changes on pages 7 and 8 were from the original Dinkey North and South project guidelines, and were part of the handout distributed in July, at which time other members had not expressed any concern on this item.

Regarding Fir and Cedar Clumps and Fisher Rest Site Treatments

A member noted that the discussion in the field included the lack of understory, and that they were familiar with studies where fishers were found to prefer dense understory, not only snags. Therefore, they did not support removing firs and/or cedars, specifically the language regarding pine clumps on page 7 (D) and (E). Pine were not facing extinction, and the data should not be extrapolated to the landscape. Joint fact-finding could be conducted on this topic.

A member stated that Dinkey North and South had very little pine on site, and the reduced basal area in those areas did not have a large effect on the project. The Forest Service should not apply such a prescription across the landscape, and instead examine and select carefully areas where it would be appropriate to favor pine over the understory. The group should continue to monitor the result of prescriptions applied to Dinkey South to aid in further decisions on the Bald Mountain site.

Another member explained that the language must be understood in relation to the quality of fisher clumps in an area. In this case, the areas were identified already as low value for fisher. There needs to be some recommendation for how to treat these areas. Additional members suggested that fir and cedar rapidly reestablish themselves, and the group should thus discuss the level of treatment needed to obtain desired pine conditions in the short and long term; as always, the group was trying to plan for habitat now and habitat in the future. Another member expressed his support for deferring to staff, treating small areas cautiously, and monitoring the effects.

The member who expressed concern about the section stated that he is not interested in what was done for Dinkey North and South, and feels that fisher will be lost if the prescription is carried out, regardless of potential future habitat creation.

Another member noted that areas that had dense fisher clumps and high quality sites still might have intervening areas with more open understory, and that there was an opportunity in section E to increase retention and improve habitat quality in these areas.

A member also noted that the clump size was undefined, and suggested that 1/8 of an acre was too small, and there should be a larger minimum size. The member also noted that he would always prefer girdling of fir and cedar to removal. The option of girdling is missing, while removal is mentioned throughout the document. This does not reflect group discussions.

Another member noted that the general understory messiness, not just that associated with fisher rest sites, was missing from the revised guidelines. He reiterated that it remained confusing what the context for these objectives was, whether to reduce fire hazard or to benefit fisher.

Another member noted that page 3 (F) addresses tree cover around fisher resting platforms. There is also some new language about the retention of burn piles for the purpose of increasing prey, which should also help maintain cool temperatures in clumps that are more open and rocky areas.

Fisher Marking Guidelines Title and Intent

The document's title – "Dinkey Collaborative Decision Priorities" – and purpose are unclear. It was unclear whether the document is meant to only provide guidelines for marking crews to

preserve fisher habitat in areas where a planning decision has been made to remove trees, or to describe the entire suite of treatments on a project.

One member requested clarification of where the range of other treatments aside from tree removal will be described, including prescribed fire and snag and large down log creation. They felt the guidelines were expressly focused on timber harvesting, particularly section 5(E) on pine, which applied to large portions of the landscape. Another member reiterated the earlier comment that more detail is needed about treatments that will occur outside fisher rest areas.

It was suggested that a decision tree could help clarify the decisions and intended use of this document, so members could see where a broad topic fits, and what companion documents must also be considered. It was noted that this document was at the level of implementation, not planning, and would be used once decisions had already been made about what types of treatment would take place in different areas, such as thinning or prescribed fire.

ACTION ITEM: All members to send comments on the fisher marking guidelines to Kim Sorini-Wilson by close of business on August 31. Ms. Sorini-Wilson to then revise the document.

ACTION ITEM: Sue Britting to help draft introductory text that explains the document's purpose and intended application.

3. Review of GIS Details of Bald Mountain Proposed Action

Scoping Discussion

Mr. Jones-Yellin explained that the proposed action is different from the scoping notice that will be published the following week. The proposed action focuses on treatments and their effects, and will be used to develop alternatives with members of the Collaborative. The version of the proposed action distributed for the August 17 meeting was the same as that provided in June, 2012, which has not yet been revised.

The group had questions about the process and scoping notice:

- In regards to the timeline for the scoping notice, it was asked how long the comment window would be available. Mr. Jones-Yellin clarified that the proposed publication of the scoping notice is August 23, 2012 with an available window of 30 days for public comments.
- One member felt strongly that the Forest had not developed the scoping notice in collaboration with the members per the process outlined in the charter, and questioned the value of the process.
 - Mr. Jones-Yellin responded that the scoping notice was meant to provide an overview of what is being considered, while the proposed action focused on detailed actions.
- Other members echoed the concern about the timeline for publishing the scoping notice, feeling that it would rush the development of the proposed action. Another

member echoed this concern, and also noted the need to continue moving forward on projects and learning through experimentation.

- Mr. Jones-Yellin acknowledged the concern about the planning timeframe, reiterated his desire to get group input, and also noted the need to receive public comment. He emphasized that the group provides important direction to the Forest.
- Other members echoed the concern about the appropriate level of detail, noting that in some cases the proposed action provided detail where the group has not made a recommendation, and in others does not provide enough detail. Although the project covers 18,000 acres, for instance, the group does not know what areas will actually be treated. Publishing a scoping notice now would limit the group's ability to recommend treatment units.
- The earlier member reiterated that the development process was inconsistent with the planning process identified in the charter.
 - The facilitator commented that the charter did not call out the scoping notice as a specific document on which the group would make a recommendation. He suggested that if the group felt this specificity was missing, it could revisit the issue and add language in December, when the group is scheduled to review its commitment to the charter.
 - The member reiterated that he did not believe the process was collaborative or consistent with the charter. He suggested that the group discuss the issue at the present time. He added that the scoping notice was under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, which meant that one cannot appeal a decision unless one has commented on the scoping notice, and that the current document does not provide enough specificity to do this.
- Another member disagreed, and felt that the process of developing material over the year had been collaborative, including field visits and other efforts. The intent of the scoping notice was to inform the public and allow them to be involved. He asked the Forest to reassure him that this was accurate.
- Mr. Jones-Yellin proposed circulating a draft scoping notice to the Collaborative, and requested input on an appropriate timeline for members to provide comments thereafter. The final choice was ten days after the circulation of the draft, August 30.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mosé to send out the draft scoping notice to members on Monday, August 20.
- **ACTION ITEM:** All members to provide comments about the scoping notice by COB August 30.

Bald Mountain GIS Project Site Presentation

Ms. Kim Sorini-Wilson presented the Collaborative with the Bald Mountain project site in GIS data layers. She went through the site highlighting areas of previous discussion, such as Camp Fresno, Reese Unit, and potential burn areas. The burn areas were noted as preliminary, and members received this information a few weeks prior.

- One member expressed that he does not want the Reese Unit to include commercial harvesting. Staff noted that Craig Thompson, the fisher expert supporting the group, had suggested including mechanical treatments and then monitoring them intensively to learn about their effects. Another member suggested having both burning and mechanical treatments in the unit.
- In response to a question, staff clarified that there are approximately 2,000 acres in Bald Mountain that can be treated with prescribed burning. Many areas are rocky or have pockets of trees in rocks that are hard to burn. Staff are still gathering field information.
- One member asked why there was pressure to release the scoping notice.
 - A staff member stated that the Forest Service creates a timeline based on the deadlines for timber sales and based on that date the scoping notice needs to be released to be able to complete the rest of the procedures on schedule.
 - The member felt that meant that timber sales were driving the planning and derailing the group.
 - Another member expressed that the urgency comes from the general public and the communities that want something done, and put pressure on Congress which led to the CFLR program. There will also be funding pressure.
- Regarding plantations, one member asked for more information on the variety of plantations, noting there were at least 3 different types, and it wasn't clear whether some areas were uniform or clumpy. The group should use this as an opportunity to create heterogeneity on the landscape.
- The estimated treatable acreage was 3,800 acres, although this may change based on data being collected. It was anticipated that there would be a single contract for all mechanical work in a single year. Other treatments would build off this.
- A member requested a list of the stand numbers proposed for treatment.
- It was noted that the layers discussed from the GIS presentation are located in a zip folder on the databasin.org website. In addition, PDF files will be posted on databasin.org for members without access to GIS.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Kim and Dorian to post PDF images of the GIS layers for the Bald Mountain project site.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Kim to provide stand numbers for Bald Mountain proposed treatments.

4. Individual Communication Commitments and September 19 Open House

Ms. Pam Flick asked the group to check in with their progress on the communication strategies commitments. She went through each strategy topic noted in the supplemental handout:

- **Strategy 1 and 2.** The Sierra National Forest (SNF) and Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) are working together to provide accessible information on the Dinkey website, and maintain the interested parties contact list.
- **Strategy 3.** Mr. Van Velsor stated that at the end of July, there was a report created based on the Collaborative's accomplishments, and the media was alerted, yet there

was no story published. He also noted that the Collaborative could use the Wilderness Society's Blog as an example of a communication tool.

- Mr. Bagley had discussions with the local paper (Sierra Star and Fresno Bee) and reported that once project implementation begins, the press would run a story.
 - Ms. Rebecca Garcia (not present) is working on a press release and a tentative agenda for the September 19 open house public meeting. She requested member's feedback on the press release.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** All members to provide feedback on the press release by August 31.
- **Strategy 4.** The group noted the desire to create a virtual tour available on the internet featuring the Dinkey Landscape.
- **Strategy 5.** Ms. Flick and the SNF are currently creating the standard PowerPoint presentation for the Collaborative.
- **Strategy 6.** Many members stated that they have been updating their constituent groups of the Dinkey Collaborative's progress, for example, the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council, the Shaver Lake Chamber of Commerce, Shaver Lake Historical Society, Cal Poly Advisory Council, Tribal Councils, Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative, the timber industry, Southern California Edison, and specific individuals.
- **Strategy 7.** It was noted that Ms. Flick would be moderating at the Sierra Nevada Alliance Conference on September 21 through 22 in South Lake Tahoe. In addition, the Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management annual meeting is in October.
- **Strategy 8.** The Search and Rescue Group holds an annual fundraiser in the Shaver Lake area with events such as cycling and running. It was noted that the Collaborative should get involved with this event to promote various volunteer groups.
 - It was announced that the Harvest Festival at the Intermountain Nursery is on October 11 and 12.
- **Strategy 9.** Ms. Flick suggested that the Collaborative create an annual event calendar for future outreach opportunities.
- **Strategy 10.** At The Sierra Nevada Conservancy field visit, it was noted that the Conservancy desired to extend support to the Dinkey Collaborative. The field visit consisted of many dynamic "hands on" techniques, such as the use of workbooks while in the field.
- **Strategy 11.** Members noted that there is a communication gap between the County Supervisors and the Collaborative due to the supervisor's lack of knowledge in the Collaborative's activities. It was recommended that the Forest regularly brief the relevant Boards of Supervisors as noted in the Communication Plan.

The Open House outreach event is scheduled for September 19 at 7 PM with doors open at 6 PM. Ms. Flick walked members through the agenda, noting the planned welcome address and information stations with a flyer for each table. Members who planned to attend were reminded to use the group's media protocol when engaging the public. The following volunteers were suggested and confirmed for hosting tables:

- **Vegetation:** Mr. Rojas (not present) and Mr. Kent Duysen.
- **Fire and Fuels Information:** Ms. Carolyn Ballard and Rich Bagley
- **Recreation and Roads Information:** Mr. Andy Hosford, Mr. Stan Harger, and Teri Drivas (not present)
- **Native American Information:** Hon. Ron Goode, Mr. Dirk Charley, Ms. Joanna Cline
- **Wildlife and Aquatics Information:** Ms. Kim Sorini-Wilson, and Mr. Craig Thomas (not present)
- **Monitoring and Socioeconomic Information:** Mr. Stan Van Velsor and Mr. Marc Meyer (not present)

The group proposed a volunteer and employment opportunities station, but declined given the lack of specific volunteer restoration activities at this time. The Sierra High School Environmental Adventures Club was mentioned as a volunteer source for the Open House Event.

An announcement was made for a basket weaving and acorn-grinding event at the Central Sierra Historical Society Museum at Shaver Lake, on September 2.

Ms. Flick encouraged the group to forward the save-the-date email to as many interested parties as possible. She also requested comments on the draft press release. Mr. Jones Yellin noted that flyers would be posted in the SNF district office and any available bulletin boards.

ACTION ITEM: All members to distribute save the date flyers for the open house outreach event, and provide any comments on the press release by August 24.

ACTION ITEM: Mosé to post the Open House Save-the-Date in District and other Forest Service offices.

5. Prescribed Fire Prioritization Process

Given that the previous agenda item ran over time, in coordination with Mr. Jones-Yellin, the facilitator noted that the Draft Prescribed Fire Prioritization piece would be rescheduled for the next full Collaborative meeting. Members were to provide Ms. Ballard with emailed comments on the Fire Prioritization handout by August 31.

6. Initial Thoughts on a Landscape Planning Framework

In June and August, two conference calls were held to discuss a landscape-planning framework. Ms. Britting described the group's intent for the framework, such as pace and scale of treatments, ecological processes, site disturbances, and characterization of cumulative effects. The approach was dynamic rather than static, and hence more closely aligned with vegetation and wildlife population dynamics. One can think about today and the future together: what should the disturbance dynamic be, what should be the relative distribution of disturbances of

different intensity? The conversation would talk place before getting into the details of project planning.

It was noted that zones, vegetation type, and the GTR 220 are common divisions of landscapes. Disturbances in the landscape also create opportunities for division, for example, the effects insects, pests, ozone, and climate change. Topography, slope, and aspect are starting points. Members had a variety comments about disturbance zones and the landscape framework:

- Consider creating a Collaborative glossary for acronyms and commonly used.
ACTION ITEM: Dorian to create a comprehensive acronym glossary for members of the Collaborative.
- Members expressed general support for using ecological disturbances as a landscape planning tool.
- It was noted that the document needed more information, and suggested to remove the last sentence of the first paragraph.
- One member expressed concern about referencing the GTR 220, which he felt focused on timber harvest and not ecological disturbance. He stated his comfort with natural disturbances, but not any treatments involving logging or suppressing natural disturbances.
- Another member noted that Craig Thompson's funding was limited, and requested Craig's involvement in understanding mechanical treatments and prescribed fire in fisher areas.
- Another member also supported the approach, and suggested that it will be challenging to identify a disturbance zone and the levels of disturbance expected, especially in ways that are accessible to non-technical audiences. One could focus on how ecological disturbances affect the whole landscape, which would help prioritize treatments. Another option was to prioritize areas based on the greatest threat or greatest needs.
- One member noted scientific studies about historical fire in the area, including high intensity fire, and areas that have not burned frequently. He offered to provide references to the group.
ACTION ITEM: Chad to forward members articles about fire regimes at the landscape level.
- Another member suggested focusing on what the landscape level desired conditions were, and what areas would be more suitable for larger or smaller disturbance effects. An important overlay would be historical fire regimes.
- It was noted that landscape planning necessitated starting a conversation about fisher sites and treatment opportunities, and where to go after the group has exhausted opportunities for working in the high fisher probability areas.
- In response to a question, it was noted that Strategically Placed Landscape Area Treatments (SPLAT) were used 10 years ago with the intent of slowing down fires. However, this approach was only effective in uniform landscapes; Bald Mountain site has rock outcroppings, campsites, and other obstacles that hinder the SPLAT method.
- It was noted that the concept of developing treatments around disturbance arose because disturbance is a desired element of future landscapes. Disturbance cycles are

an important part of the dynamic landscape, including fisher movements and expansions.

- Mr. Jones-Yellin suggested showing disturbance overlays for the landscape, and the historical disturbance trends in different zones. He cautioned against replicating existing frameworks like the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Instead the emphasis would be on the “process of disturbance processes,” coupled with GTR elements, elevation, and other information.
 - It was suggested that ecological unit indicators and fire potentials were also relevant information.
 - It was asked whether it was possible to use LiDAR data and fisher data overlays to search for patterns linking species presence and the use or lack of use of different areas.

7. General Updates

Mr. Mosé Jones-Yellin presented the general updates to the members:

Regarding Project Updates

Participants had a supplemental handout to reference while Mr. Jones-Yellin discussed the progress of Eastfork, Soaproot, Kings River Experimental Watershed, Forks Hazard Timber Sales, Dinkey North and South, and Bald Mountain. Members had comments about the project updates:

- One member asked when the group was going to go out and help the Forest apply the latest fisher marking guideline concepts to the Eastfork project. The facilitator explained that he did not think Mr. Porter had invited members to come and do the mark. Staff noted that the Forest would apply these to the mark if logistics permitted.
- It was suggested that it would be helpful to compare the original mark and a revised mark at Eastfork.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Staff to provide copies of the final Soaproot and Eastfork prescriptions.
- One member reiterated his concern that there should be a large buffer area for clumps, identified as a specific distance or acreage. Another member noted that page 5 in the marking guidelines has added a point about retaining shade far enough into a clump.
- Mr. Jones-Yellin walked through the other project updates, reminding them that he would circulate a draft on August 20, and comments would be invited through August 30th.

Regarding the Monitoring Coordinator, budget discussion, and status of the socioeconomic assessment

Mr. Stan Van Velsor, the Co-Lead for the Monitoring Work Group, announced that members of the Monitoring Work Group had reviewed applications and selected a monitoring coordinator, Ms. Susan Roberts. Her resume was distributed to the Collaborative. Comments followed:

- One member asked why the full group did not decide who to hire. Mr. Van Velsor explained that he understood that the Monitoring Work Group had this discretion. Mr. Van Velsor that the Collaborative's recommended monitoring budget for 2013 had been submitted to the Forest, and was to include the first two phases of the socioeconomic assessment, which would hopefully start with the new federal fiscal year.

Regarding the Revised Activities Handout

The facilitator had worked with Mr. John Stewart (not present) to the Activities Handout. Members had comments about the handout:

- It was suggested to add job or volunteer opportunities. After further discussion the group declined to do this, noting the broad nature of the document.
- Update the Collaborative's website link.
- Note that the Sierra Institute does not have a signed contract with the Collaborative; therefore, refer to them as "contractor".
- Remove the proposal link because the members have not approved it.

Regarding KREW funds

Mr. Jones-Yellin stated that the funding for KREW monitoring work finally did not come from the CFLR, but was part of the range funds. He added that any request for funding would be brought before the group before any actions were taken. He expressed the desire to continue the transparent relationship with the group for future projects.

Regarding other Announcements

On August 23, 2012, a fisher presentation on the effects of rodenticide is planned. The flyer was available at the meeting to any interested parties.

8. Attendees

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|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Rich Bagley | 11. Amy Granat | 21. Kim Sorini-Wilson, USFS |
| 2. Sue Britting | 12. Chad Hanson | 22. Frank Stambach |
| 3. Dirk Charley, USFS | 13. Stan Harger | 23. Gerry Stambach |
| 4. Narvell Connor | 14. Steve Haze | 24. John Stewart |
| 5. Kent Duysen | 15. Adam Hernandez | 25. Ryan Stewart |
| 6. Larry Duysen | 16. Andy Hosford | 26. Craig Thomas |
| 7. Pamela Flick | 17. Joe Kaminski | 27. Stan Van Velsor |
| 8. Dorian Fougères, CCP | 18. Ray Laclergue | 28. Cindy Whelan, USFS |
| 9. Veronica Garcia | 19. John Mount | |
| 10. Gabriella Golik, CCP | 20. Mark Smith | |